

Message Text

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64

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SS-15

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P R 040001Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2468

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

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DEPT FOR MEADOWS FROM BROWN

MONTREAL FOR ICAO REPRESENTATIVE

E.9. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, AS

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: COMMENTS ON CURRENT CIVIL AIR PROBLEMS

REF: (A) MELBOURNE 1402; (B) MELBOURNE 1287; (C) MELBOURNE A-39

1. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DELIVERING DOT'S USER CHARGE ANALYSIS WHICH ARRIVED DECEMBER 3 (FIRST TRANSMITTAL STILL HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED) DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH TREVOR PYMAN ON AN INFORMAL, PERSONAL BASIS. BASED ON WHAT WAS SAID, AND, IN SOME CASES, NOT SAID, HAVE COME TO FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

A) PAN AM FARES: APPEARS THAT STRATEGY FOR THIS EXERCISE WAS PROBABLY PROGRAMMED BY QANTAS CHAIRMAN SIR DONALD ANDERSON WHO DREW UPON HIS INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF ATG TO DEVISE A SCHEME FOR QANTAS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. KNOWING THE ATG AS WELL AS HE DOES, HE SEEMS TO HAVE CAPITALIZED ON THE AGENCY'S PRESENT BUREUCRATIC WEAKNESS

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AND CARRIED THE BALL TO HIS GOAL BEFORE ATG PERSONNEL

REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING. HE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY AIDED BY HALTON, THE DOT SECRETARY IN CANBERRA, WHO IS ANXIOUS TO MAKE HIS MARK AND BE RETAINED IF JONES LEAVES DUE TO A CABINET RESHUFFLE OR IF THE LABOR PARTY IS VOTED OUT OF OFFICE PREMATURELY. MINISTER JONES OBVIOUSLY SAW POLITICAL GAIN SINCE HE HAS NEVER HESITATED TO PROCLAIM HIS READINESS "TO CUT THE U.S.S. AND PAN AMERICAN DOWN TO SIZE". PYMAN ADMITTED HE HAD NOT KEPT ON TOP OF THE ISSUE, BUT HAD RELIED ON OTHERS, WHICH IS PROBABLY THE REASON NEITHER WE NOR PAN AM WERE NOTIFIED ABOUT THE NEW FARES. HOWEVER, HE ALSO ADDED THAT THE ATG THINKS THAT THE BILATERAL DOES NOT APPLY IN THIS CASE. AT ANY RATE, DOUBT IF WE CAN EXPECT A REPLY TO OUR NOTE BEFORE DECEMBER 5 AT THE EARLIEST, WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE NEGATIVE.

B) USER CHARGES: PYMAN PLEASED TO RECEIVE BINDER'S NOVEMBER 7 LETTER, BUT CAUTIONED COULD NOT ENVISAGE ANY CONSULTATIONS BEFORE THE END OF FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. HE IS PROBABLY RIGHT BECAUSE AUSTRALIA GRINDS PRETTY MUCH TO A HALT FROM MID DECEMBER THROUGH SUMMER VACATIONS IN JANUARY UNTIL SCHOOL STARTS AGAIN IN EARLY FEBRUARY; THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY THAT BINDER'S LETTER WILL BE SERIOUSLY STUDIED UNTIL THEN. WHENEVER CONSULTATIONS ARE HELD, JONES, AND MORE ESPECIALLY HALTON, WILL PROBABLY FORCE THEM TO BE HELD IN CANBERRA. THIS IS CONTRARY TO ATG'S WISHES, BUT A SUITABLE COMPROMISE CAN PROBABLY BE WORKED OUT BY MEETING IN HONOLULU. THIS WOULD ALSO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF AVOIDING THE POLITICAL PRESSURE THAT WOULD PROBABLY BE EXERTED IN CANBERRA.

C) PAN AMPASSENGER SCHEDULES: ALTHOUGH NO WRITTEN CONFIRMATION APPROVING THE INCREASES IN PAN AM'S FLIGHTS HAS BEEN RECEIVED, WE HAVE HAD VERBAL ASSURANCE ON AT LEAST THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS STATING THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM. WHEN PYMAN WAS QUERIED AS TO WHY PHILLIPS HAD NOT SIGNED THE LETTER, HE REPLIED THAT JONES INSISTS ON SEEING AND ACTING UPON ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO CAPACITY. THE LETTER OF CONFIRMATION COULD POSSIBLY BE HELD UP IN AN ATTEMPT TO TIE IT TO THE AIR FARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTION, BUT WHAT MORE THAN LIKELY HAS HAPPENED IS THAT JONES IS SO PRE-OCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL AIR MATTERS, AS WELL AS OTHER TRANSPORTAION PROBLEMS, THAT HE HAS NOT HAD A CHANCE TO FOCUS ON IT.
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